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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM.

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Each member can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Members will be careful to write on only one side of the paper and to use black ink.

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November, 1891.

QUESTION CLIII.

What will the Theosophists who insist on unqualified belief in and obedience to the Masters, as taught by Madame Blavatsky, do with the statement made by Moncure D. Conway in a recent issue of the "Arena"? He says she openly confessed to him that the works represented by her as done by the Masters, and implicitly believed in by those who witnessed the same, were not the work of the Masters at all, but simply the result of "glamour" exercised by herself.—F. W.

Ans.—Not only the class of Theosophists described in the Question, but all other Theosophists, and even all rational people of any name, will do with Mr. Conway's statements as with statements by anybody else, *i.e.*, examine them, estimate their correctness, and pass upon them accordingly.

In the first place, Mr. Conway's qualifications as a reporter are to be noted. He went to Adyar, which he describes as 15 miles from Madras, it being 5. He defines the Guru of a chela as a "Mahatma"! He states that the 77 Branches of the T. S.

in India in 1879 are now (1891) "withering away under the Blavatsky scandals", there being now, in fact, over 150 in India, their Resolutions of reverence for her memory enthusiastic, and a great revival of activity progressing.

In the second place, Mr. Conway's thoroughness as an investigator is worth inspection. He passed "hours" at Adyar in "study of the subjects of Madame's hypnotic powers—as I supposed them to be", met Dr. Hartmann and other witnesses of the "marvels" there, but never asked a question thereon. He quotes part of a communication from Mr. Broughton upon the letter taken by Occult means from the "Vega" to India, but seems never to have read the full account and the testimony by Mr. Eglinton and others given in *The Occult World*. He cites the Coulombs' "confession" of conspiracy with Madame Blavatsky in frauds, the trap-door arrangements of the shrine, and the letters asserted by Madame Coulomb to have come from Madame Blavatsky; apparently never having heard that the "confession" was blown to pieces on investigation, that the trap-door was conclusively shown to have been introduced by Mr. Coulomb himself after Madame Blavatsky left Adyar, and that the alleged letters were spurious. Yet all the affidavits and testimony are in print and accessible.

In the third place, Mr. Conway's astuteness as a reader of customs and of human nature must be observed. Oriental modes of salutation and of reverence are so different from ours that he detects them at once as covers to deception. The fact that a cane lounge had cushions and that the magazines were not old promptly revealed to him the hollowness of any self-sacrifice at Adyar. When the chelas at dinner narrated some marvellous experience and H. P. B. turned to Mr. Conway with the words "Now think of that!", simple folk might suppose her to be amusing herself at the expense of a man who had avowedly come to see the production of tea-cups, but the more sagacious Mr. Conway saw the high-priestess exultant in the success of her wiles and eager to ensnare himself. When he wished to test the shrine and so put the Mahatmas to proof, H. P. B. told him that he was 3 days too late, as her Guru had forbidden it. Laughing at him? Not a bit of it. He

solemnly argues out the skilfulness of her manœuvre, so well fitted to protect the "simple-hearted Hindoos around her", and accepts her gracious promise to visit him at London in her astral body.

And now about the "glamour". Mr. Conway had told her that he had a sincere purpose in coming, that no one would be more ready than himself to acknowledge the reality of extraordinary events, and that he had a congregation in London not afraid to recognize new facts if verified. "Now", said he, "what do these rumors mean? I hear of your lifting tea-pots from beneath your chair, summoning lost jewels, conversing with Mahatmas a thousand miles away." To this adjuration Madame Blavatsky thus replied: "Your questions shall be answered. You are a public teacher and ought to know the truth. It is glamour; people think they see what they do not see. That is the whole of it." (Page 581-2).

There are 3 ways to interpret this response. One is Mr. Conway's. Amplified, the meaning is this: "I am and always have been a humbug, having no real occult power, and only bamboozling people into thinking so. It is true that I gain nothing by it,—indeed, am rather a loser, and true also that an avowal of my tricks would end my power to perform them. Nevertheless, I make no secret of my frauds to you, and all the less so because you have a congregation and can 'give me away' to the world. Your position entitles you to unreserved frankness, and I impose no secrecy whatever. Behold this living lie!"

Another way is this. "No small part of the optical marvels I know how to perform are through illusion,—the same in kind as the well-known feats of fakirs in this land, and as the snake which I made Olcott and Judge to see on the breakfast-table in New York. There is no question of 'miracle' at all; it is a question of larger knowledge of etheric vibrations and collateral matters. In the region of sound, there is some analogy in ventriloquism. But understand that I am speaking only of the lower class of phenomena. There are higher classes under higher laws, and of still higher I do not speak in a chat like this".

Then there is a third way. "You soft-headed and innocent old goose, do you really suppose that I am going seriously to answer a person who proclaims in advance his mission here as you did, and expects to see me execute phenomena whereon he may write a sermon for his London babes? Shall I now produce a coffee-pot in mid-air, or crown with jewels your addled pate? Never! Don't believe in such things, but get you to the rest of the flock and solemnly cackle 'Glamour!'".

Brethren, did any of you *know* H. P. B.? Then you know also the likelihood of this third interpretation.

The dominant impression from Mr. Conway's article is its astonishing feebleness. He is a strong, graceful, cultivated, delightful writer of high repute, not, perhaps, very profound, and certainly not famed for discrimination between fact and inference, but of unquestioned rank. Yet this production is jerky, inconsequential, weak, petty, superficial, flimsy, and able in nothing but unjust inuendo. It seems to have been written hastily, but this hardly accounts for its great descent from Mr. Conway's normal plane. Surely it is another instance of that singular fatuity which appears to beset the assailants of H. P. B. That they must perforce defy all accepted laws of motive or life, explaining conduct on principles the reverse of any ever known to human beings, ignoring facts plain as noonday and inventing theories palpably preposterous, is inevitable. But they all alike display the same incapacity to perceive a fine impulse, to honor industry or zeal or self-sacrifice, to sense heroism either physical or moral. With one accord they stop their ears to evidence and their mouths to truth. Madame Coulomb's testimony is honored and Mrs. Besant's discredited. Hindoos are despised when they certify to her genuineness, and coddled when they hint a suspicion of her. The strange moral taint which seems to attach to those who assail her is one of the best proofs of her true position. So often has this been illustrated that it actually suggests some occult law. Even the sense of humor becomes paralyzed. Mr. Conway, not perhaps a wit but certainly not the reverse, never suspects that she is laughing at him, but plods along with a solemnity which is ten-fold more comic because of its unconsciousness.

H. P. B. was always unduly sensitive to attack. It is surprising when we think of the comparative littleness of the foe. It would have been impossible could she have foreseen its mental ineptitude, its waning popularity, and its approaching derision.

QUESTION CXLI. (CONTINUED).

J. D. B.—In FORUM No. 27 the question is asked, "Is there any truth in the frequent assertion that Theosophists look with disfavor upon marriage?", and the answer is given direct, "*None whatever.*"

This answer is perfectly correct, and the plain common-sense elucidation that follows is to the point. Marriage is not only justifiable and desirable, but a necessity with our present humanity, for the perpetuation of the human race, for the purpose of securing the home life, and for the prevention of greater evils among men and women alike. As human nature goes, by far the greater number of individuals, men and women alike, are better off in every way if suitably married. The real exceptions are properly dealt with in the closing section on page 4 of the previous answer by the editor. The answer, however, refers to the *fact* of marriage, and sticks closely to the question. But, it might be added, there are marriages and marriages. The answer does not enter into the philosophy of the relation of the sexes, but assumes that for the great majority of persons that philosophy closely adheres to and is to be worked out in the marriage relation, and this is sound doctrine. If one is ready for the occult training referred to in the last paragraph, that is another matter, yet the preliminary training in self-conquest can often be best secured in the marriage relation, and in the School of Pythagoras, as well as in many of the Ancient Mysteries, this training was so secured. It was so among the ancient Brahmins. As a complete, and therefore final, philosophy, Malthusianism is a failure. As a subterfuge or a compromise between evils, it has its use. To begin with well-sorted marriages, where age, tastes, education, and position justify it, the opportunity is presented to practice that forgetfulness of self, that consideration for others, and that mutual helpfulness in every way that best secure the greatest good to

all concerned, and at the same times lay the foundation for higher training to follow. No such self-denial is contemplated in Malthusianism, but rather self-indulgence. On the other hand. premature steps in occult training, before this self-denial has been secured in every department of man's life, can only precipitate the very evils referred to in the FORUM.

The bar to occult training and progress is not marriage, but selfishness and ignorance in every form, and he who enters upon the occult path without previously learning self-denial, and, to a considerable extent, securing self-conquest, had better never enter the path at all. If one wishes to know the result of scorning marriage and rushing into occult training under forcible restraint, let him read Lecky's *History of European Morals.*

To the question "Do Theosophists approve of marriage?", the answer is, Most certainly they do. If the question is, "Can the highest human development be attained co-incident with sexual relations?", the answer is, Certainly not; for the reason that the very next plane of consciousness above the normal physical can be entered safely only when the individual is free from desire on the physical plane; free from the "pairs of opposites", pleasure and pain, desire and satiety, joy and sorrow; and as these opposites are specially active in the usual relations of the sexes, they cannot be indulged and yet the individual become conscious and *Master* on the higher plane. When, however, it is stated that scarcely one person in a million is *ready* to enter the higher plane in the line of normal evolution, and that "the Mahatma is the efflorescence of his age," it must be seen that marriage is the normal state of nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine persons out of every million of the average humanity of to-day.

The philosophy of the Secret Doctrine is in the highest sense utilitarian, but in order to be complete it must include the exception no less than the multitude, and must legislate for the efflorescence no less than for the root and branch. There are no half-truths in the Secret Doctrine, however even the majority of so-called Theosophists may half understand or altogether misapply it. The FORUM has struck the key note, and the last word will not soon be said on this misunderstood, much-

abused, yet exceedingly important subject. The Theosophical Society is not a "School of Occultism", but a "Nucleus of a Brotherhood of Humanity", and when its mission in this direction is achieved, and mankind are indeed *Brothers*, then schools of occultism will be in order. Then the consciousness of humanity will already be open to the higher plane in the normal evolution of the human race. In the meantime, nothing but a complete philosophy can direct and inspire, foster and secure the higher evolution, and that is contained in the Secret Doctrine; and marriage, when divested of all priestly interference, and when entered into judiciously and intelligently, will be found to promote the higher evolution more than all other civil contracts and social usages combined.

QUESTION CLIV.

Is a denizen of Kama Loka properly classified as a Devachanee?

A. K.—At first sight the question would seem to confuse these two states or conditions: that is, it would seem that a human entity can exist in Kama Loka and in Devachan at one and the same time, or that the Devachanee—the entity in the state of Devachan—was an inhabitant of some locality in space known as Kama Loka. It seems that a too materialistic idea has been allowed to prevail. Kama Loka and Devachan are each of them states of consciousness entered after death; they are not localities in the sense that we speak of a living man being in America or in Europe. But the man may be conscious of happiness or misery while his vehicle of manifestation—the body when in earth-life—is located in any country, and his happiness or misery does not necessarily depend on the locality. According to the *Key to Theosophy* there would seem to be a somewhat sharply-defined limit between these two states, caused by the division of the human principles according to their nature. Thus it might be said that the Higher Manas in conjunction with Buddhi—there called Manas-Taijasi—passes after death almost immediately into the state of Devachan, while the lower Manas and the "lower" principles" are in the state of Kama-loka. With the knowledge we have of the human

"principles" and their action during life and after death, we may trace matters thus: Prana, the life-principle which acts in the physical body, is at death withdrawn or altered in action so that the physical body ultimately becomes disintegrated as such. The astral eidolon, Linga-Sarira, which before birth and during life has served as a mould upon which the physical cells of the body have been moulded—or, rather, moulded themselves under the action of the life principle—is sooner or later disintegrated also. There thus remains the lower Manas in association with Kama-rûpa. It is this "form" which is the "denizen of Kama-loka". The association of Manas with it as the "lower Manas" may be best understood by reading the *Key to Theosophy*, pp. 174 to 185. Roughly, the idea may perhaps be said to be that Manas is the Ego which reïncarnates and is imprisoned in the lower principles. That in its own nature Manas ascends toward Buddhi, while in incarnation its lower aspect is turned toward Kama-rûpa which is the seat and cause of material existence. Thus at death under natural circumstances, the necessity for incarnation being done away, the entire energy of Manas is devoted to its own essential nature and existence. Therefore there is no longer a stream of energy continuing to proceed from Manas which as the lower Manas vitalizes the Kama-rûpa. We thus have after death the results of two energies: (1) the energy manifested and pertaining to material existence; (2) the energy which resulted in action and aspirations of a spiritual and exalted nature. The first kind of energy will cause the denizen of Kama-loca to remain in that state for a time proportional to the amount of energy devoted during life on earth to such objects; and similarly the Ego in Devachan remains in that state a longer or shorter time according as the aspirations were selfish or altruistic. Thus the reïncarnating Ego or the Higher Manas after death enters the state of Devachan, while the energy proceeding from it, which during incarnation has been suffered to be devoted to things apart from the Manasic existence, has to be dissipated or disintegrated in Kama-loka. In other words, the Devachanee is the real human being, while the denizen of Kama-loka is only its reflection, a reflection which after death is severed from its source.

It may perhaps be asked whether, since the state of Devachan and its length would seem to depend on the manner in which the Manasic energy is used during earth-life, the entity in Devachan carries with it the memory of earth-life and its highest joys. Mme. Blavatsky has said that the Devachanic entity is like an actor who is so imbued with the part he has been playing that he cannot cast it away and goes on acting the part during his sleep. It might here be said that this is purely a question of the physical memory and of brain-action. Therefore the analogy does not seem to carry us very far. But when we consider that memory and recollection and reminiscence are not dependent for their continued existence on the physical cells of the brain (though they are dependent on them for manifestation on the same plane as the physical body), we turn to the Akâsa or astral light for an explanation of the seat of memory.

In the *Secret Doctrine* it is stated that there are as many planes and subdivisions of Akâsa (astral light is one of its lowest phases) as there are planes of consciousness. Thus, in considering the reïncarnating Ego or Manas, we see that there is an akâsic memory exactly suited to its condition surrounding it. Therefore the "ideal efflorescence of all the abstract, undying, and eternal qualities", those qualities which have been aspired to and perhaps partially realized during earth-life, on the entrance to the state of Devachan is free to come to its highest growth without any hindrance from the material obstacles which were entailed on the Ego by the fact of its incarnation. The Ego may be said to exist in earth-life where through aspiration and desire it generates causes. These causes have their appropriate effect in earth-life, Devachan, and Kama Loka, and in each case the conditions of those states of existence will be tempered by the Akasic records of the latest earth-life in which the records were made. Thus, so far as Devachan is concerned, pain being caused in earth-life by the presence of obstacles to the realization of the aspirations, these obstacles are removed and the entity lives a kind of transcendental continuation of its life on earth in which it finds the obstacles entirely removed and all that it ever aspired to or loved surrounding it

with an unalloyed happiness. Such realization is therefore to the Ego a rest from its labors to attain its proper condition of spiritual self-consciousness, and as such is as necessary to it as sleep is to the physical body.

QUESTION CLV.

In "Notes on Devachan" in The Path for June, 1890, page 81, occurs the following: "Remember that we ourselves create our Devachan, as also our Avitchi, while yet on earth, and mostly during the latter days and even moments of our intellectual sentient lives. That feeling which is strongest in us at that supreme hour . . . . . will become the fashioner of our bliss or woe, the life-principle of our future existence". Does this mean that our last moments are more efficient in determining our state hereafter than the general tenor of our lives? If so, is not a "death-bed repentance" a valuable experience?

Ans.—The words omitted will help to explain. They are, "when, as in a dream, the events of a long life to their minutest details are marshalled in the greatest order in a few seconds in our vision, that feeling, &c." The statement is that at the death-moment this panorama of the ended life is opened before the soul, and that the dominant emotion produced by it gives the tone to the Devachan following. It is not, observe, the intellectual opinion of his displayed career which affects the dying man's future, or even his moral judgment on it, but the *feeling* he experiences on the survey. Why? Because the feeling—regret, shame, satisfaction, hope of further progress, whatever it may be—epitomizes his whole interior condition and attitude.

Suppose such panorama could be shown in life: would not the emotion aroused express the man's real nature? If it was mortification at success of enemies, pain at being distanced by rivals, sorrow at time wasted and opportunity for culture unused, regret for wrongs done, pleasure at good accomplished for others, joy at evidence of an advancing spirituality, cheer over improvement made, this dominant feeling would show what was the dominant desire, and thus indicate what was the

man's conception of happiness, of good. Similarly with the panorama unrolled in death; but as Devachan, or heaven, is what each man prefers, the feeling in death points to, fashions the Devachan awaiting him.

That this has no bearing on "death-bed repentance" is clear from two facts. *First*, as is stated in the foot-note to page 81, "that vision takes place when a person is already proclaimed dead", evidently, therefore, after speech or other evidence of repentance is ended. *Second*, the "feeling" in such "repentance" is not sorrow for sin but fear of its punishment, the man regretting his having sinned only because he will have to suffer, and consequently being quite willing to sin again if he could do so safely. There is nothing valuable in such an experience, nothing to enrich or beautify Devachan.

QUESTION CLVI.

Is the Forum willing to admit opinions differing from its own?

Ans.—Indeed it is. The contrary supposition would be an error, the contrary assertion a reckless untruth. Its very name is conclusive. It is not *The Advocate*,—a retained upholder of one set of views, or *The Judge*,—a superior holding commission to pronounce judicially and finally upon competing ones, but THE FORUM,—a place where all thinkers are welcomed and heard alike. Of course a reasonable degree of brevity is imposed, inasmuch as space is so limited, and there would be no object in printing rubbish or common-places or matter which is innutritious, but, subject to these limitations, contributions both of Questions and Answers have ever received the most cordial greeting. More than this,—they have been again and again solicited; indeed, the standing head-lines are a perpetual call to members to take part; and private appeals have been repeatedly made for material. But no machinery exists for *extorting* supplies, and the Editor of the FORUM is just as powerless to coerce Theosophists into writing for it as the Editor of a magazine is to coerce them into subscribing for it. If they either have no views or are not willing to take the trouble to express them, what is the Editor to do? He might, it is true,

print Questions alone so long as the supply held out, but this would not contribute largely to Theosophical discussion. The alternative is to answer them himself, if no one else is willing to act, and to do so with such measure of clear-headedness and sound thought as Karma has vouchsafed him at this stage. If the general apathy is varied by an occasional wincing, one may infer that somebody's nonsense or bigotry has been hit, and this is not a distressful fact. Perhaps it is hardly correct to speak of the FORUM as having opinions of "its own", as that implies that the FORUM is a personality rather than an arena, whereas the true view is that the Editor is but one of the speakers in that arena; but let there be tenderness to slight inaccuracies of speech,—to anything, in fact, short of positive misrepresentation. And let the thinkers in the Society brace up, formulate their problems, send such with or without their solutions to this ever-open field, learn that in thought as in charity it is more blessed to give than to receive, and do something to impart variety to the FORUM. If it is monotonous, and therefore dull, there must be fault outside the sanctum. And if they say—however untruly—that they have never been asked to write, let them never say it again after this issue. Karma (and the Editor) will be merciless.

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